



CITY COUNCIL

Administrative Oversight and Land Use Committee

**Tuesday, February 17, 2009
Meeting Report**

Attendance: M. Baez, J. Waltman

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 pm by J. Waltman, Vice Chair.

I. Interviews

Ernest Schlegel (appointment – Park and Recreation Advisory Committee)

Mr. Waltman explained that this Committee had recently been expanded to include representatives of the Olivet Boys' and Girls' Club, YMCA, United Way and Reading School District. He noted that this Committee has much work to do. He noted his belief that they should focus on more than simply playground maintenance. He stated his hope that athletic opportunities in school gyms, day trips, and summer job opportunities would become reality.

Mr. Schlegel stated that the City needs to get back to basics. He stated that many residents now use outlying facilities for their athletic needs. He stated his hope to begin soccer and softball programs in the City but that the City lacks the necessary infrastructure. He stated that as there is no funding, fees for programs should be charged.

Mr. Waltman stated his belief that recreation and library programs must not be discontinued by the City. He questioned how Mr. Schlegel would fund programs. Mr. Schlegel stated that the programs should be self sufficient. He stated that the City needs to invest in recreation. He stated that a network must be devised to begin programs. He suggested that recreation have its own website and that programs be stressed in schools.

Mr. Waltman noted the importance of feeling part of a team. He stated that this is a key for youth's feeling a sense of belonging and community.

Mr. Waltman stated the funding of the Police Department is excessive and his hope that with increased recreational activities that the funding could be better balanced. He again stated the need to invest in the City's youth. Mr. Schlegel stated that gangs move into areas and guard their territory. He stated that he does not see this in Reading. He stated his belief that playing into the fear gives them more power.

Ms. Katzenmoyer noted Mr. Schlegel's involvement in Committee meetings and the positive planning that has been occurring. She described their discussions of soccer, softball, dog parks, and outdoor exercise/yoga classes.

Mr. Waltman suggested having youth representation on the Committee. Mr. Schlegel noted his belief that the Hispanic community has a disconnect with local government. He stated his willingness to focus on Latin holiday events and activities.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the appointment of Mr. Schlegel to the Park and Recreation Advisory Committee.

Peter Sutliff (reappointment – Historical Architectural Review Committee)

Mr. Waltman questioned how long Mr. Sutliff has served on his Board. Mr. Sutliff noted that he has served for nine years. He noted that the meeting time has changed as meetings have become longer with the addition of the Penn's Commons District.

Mr. Waltman noted his hope that HARB enforcement would improve as Codes has been placed under the supervision of the Police Department. He stated his hope that enforcement would be proactive. Mr. Sutliff stated that most enforcement falls on neighbors who notice activity.

Mr. Waltman stated his belief that HARB and Codes should be better integrated so that City staff does not need to rely on neighbors. Mr. Sutliff stated that processes are working well but that Codes is not reporting violations while out in the neighborhoods. He noted his involvement in the Artifacts Bank and the amazing features of Reading's housing stock.

Mr. Waltman stated his belief that the entire City should be designated as historic.

Mr. Sutliff expressed his thanks to Council for upholding HARB's decisions when they have been appealed.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the reappointment of Mr. Sutliff to the Historical Architectural Review Board.

James Snyder (reappointment – Downtown Improvement District Authority)

Mr. Waltman stated that Charles Broad had recently given an update at a City Council meeting. Mr. Snyder stated that DID is excited to have an executive director in place after recent, frequent turnovers.

Mr. Waltman questioned how long Mr. Snyder had been a member of DID. Mr. Snyder noted that he has been a member since its inception.

Mr. Snyder noted his belief that Mr. Broad is working out well. He stated DID's recent work to expand on the clean and safe concept to include the Main Street program and marketing the downtown.

Mr. Waltman noted his belief that the youth of downtown should be involved. He requested that DID consider youth when planning events. Mr. Snyder noted that summer events are currently being planned. He suggested that youth shadow the Ambassadors. He noted the popularity of the escort service provided by DID Ambassadors.

Mr. Waltman noted the many issues facing the downtown. He stated that DID is needed and is working well. He noted his hope that improvements will be made.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the reappointment of Mr. Snyder to the Downtown Improvement District Authority.

The Administrative Oversight Committee adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Shelly Katzenmoyer,
Deputy City Clerk